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ABSTRACT

This description of the Accent on Excellence honors program at Clark County Community College (CCCC) examines program objectives, components, and funding. First, historical and philosophical developments in the community college field are highlighted, indicating a shift in the primary concern of community college educators from the attainment of equity to the achievement of quality education. Next, an overview is provided of honors programs in community colleges as one manifestation of this movement. Reasons for starting honors programs and benefits that can result from them are discussed. The Accent on Excellence program is described next, in terms of its emphases and components (e.g., an honors program, a community interaction forum, a distinguished residence program, and an arts alive program). The following section details how the college obtained outside funding for the program through its overall resource development plan, highlighting some of the lessons learned by CCCC about obtaining private financial support. Finally, information is provided about the Greenspun Technology and Honors Center, which was funded through the college's donor program to provide community-responsive, technology-related educational experiences for the southern Nevada region and provide opportunities for academically talented students to pursue honors study. A schedule of Technology Study offerings and a center budget are included. (AYC)

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HONORS PROGRAMS AND PRIVATE FUNDING

How One Community College Succeeded

Forum #24

Serving Academically Talented Students:
Opportunity or Obstacle?

64th Annual Convention
American Association of Community
and Junior Colleges

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HONORS PROGRAMS AND PRIVATE FUNDING
How One Community College Succeeded

Historical and Philosophical Developments

During the past three decades, American community colleges have been challenged to provide expanded access to post secondary education. We have met this challenge admirably and have developed new opportunities for previously excluded individuals to receive both the training and education necessary to participate fully in our society. The technical developments required of American industry by World War II produced dramatic changes in the occupational work force as the number of unskilled jobs declined sharply while the number of skilled, semi-professional jobs expanded rapidly. These shifts increased the educational requirements for employability. The community college evolved to meet these new demands at a low cost and thus community colleges became the principal access vehicle for American higher education.

At the time, we enjoyed a perfect match between new career opportunities and expanded access. Most of us recall those days when new community colleges were opening at a rate of one per week and higher education enrollment tripled in a single decade. Because of their low cost, community colleges became the institutions for individuals with limited resources. And community colleges were eminently practical as they structured their programs to respond directly to current job opportunities or to parallel the first two years of bachelor's degree programs. Because of their flexibility, adaptability, and availability, community colleges made enormous contributions to the dramatically changing American society.

During the late 1960's, the nation struggled to overcome a history of racial discrimination and to provide equal civil rights for all of its citizens. Since community colleges had always been responsive to societal changes, they tried to offer expanded opportunity to all who wished to enter. Emphasis was placed on the removal of barriers and on assisting individuals complete their educational goals. As a reflection of trends in the larger society, community college students started demanding more rights, more opportunity to develop their own directions, and, in some cases, the right to fail. The students objected to being placed in remedial courses or having to follow other perceived constraints and self-advisement became a common practice. Many procedures which were perceived to be barriers to admission and registration were removed.

In addition, community colleges focused on assisting students gain certification and thus achieve a sense of immediate gratification. Unfortunately, there was often not a similar focus on the skills attained or competencies acquired. The

credential rather than the achievement became the key. It is safe to say that during these years there were many students who progressed through the entire system from kindergarten through college without being required to meet the same educational standards which had been maintained in earlier years. However, given this nation's attempt to provide equity, these responses are understandable. But in retrospect, it is easy to see that both the nation and higher education overreacted.

But in the 1970's a decline in funding support began. One of the first sacrifices came through decreased student support services. While we had broadened access and student diversity, these same students were now left with less assistance to proceed through the programs. A similar pattern was occurring in the elementary and secondary schools and inadequately prepared students were graduated each year. The net result has become a negative public attitude toward education.

By 1980, it had become clear that education was caught between the nation's goal of equal opportunity for all versus an unwillingness by American taxpayers to support all of the social programs designed to attain this goal. Education soon surmised that this unwillingness to provide tax support could be overcome through an improvement in the quality of services provided. Community colleges were now faced with the dilemma of providing higher academic standards-- yet maintaining access for all.[1]

Another complicating factor for the community college dilemma had become enrollment-driven funding formulas. These formulas were obviously developed to cope with rapid and continous growth and were (to say the least) advantageous during the expanding enrollments of the 1950's and 1960's. But enrollment-driven funding formulas are decisive liabilities during periods of declining or level student enrollments. Community colleges had thus become entrapped by the need to sustain enrollment in order to support their budgets. Unfortunately, this need often shaped institutional priorities and educational programs.

Today, given all these societal changes which have caused shifts in American higher education in general and community colleges in particular, it is understandable why the AACJC motto has recently become "Opportunity With Excellence." It is similarly understandable why the theme of this year's convention is "Quality Education for a Learning Society". The primary concern of community college educators has shifted from the attainment of equity in the 1960's and 1970's to the achievement of a quality education in the 1980's.

Honors Programs in Community Colleges

One obvious manifestation of this movement toward quality education is the revival of honors programs in community

colleges. With this revival, however, many have seen a conflict between the fundamental issue of the community college open door policy and honors programming. This conflict was expressed at Clark County Community College and elsewhere by those who saw the community college role as providing only for the needs of local citizens who were academically unprepared to profit from university attendance. But in our headlong rush to attain equity for all citizens, the educational needs of our ablest and most highly motivated students were not being met by community colleges. Until recently, community colleges had expended their efforts on helping everyone and had concentrated on those with special needs-- but had largely excluded the academically advanced student. Thus, there should be no conflict here-- if community colleges are to serve community needs, this service must include the superior student. With this issue resolved for many community colleges, the four most commonly mentioned reasons for starting an honors program are as follows:

1. Honors programs should be a part of the community colleges' overall efforts to strengthen the quality of their academic programs;

2. As academic standards are raised nationwide, an increasing number of community college students can benefit from honors courses and programs;

3. Honors programs can assist community colleges in their efforts to attract and retain both outstanding students and faculty; and

4. The availability and success of these programs can enhance the public image of the community college as a place where superior scholarship is encouraged and rewarded.[2]

Nationwide, there is an increasing feeling that students, faculty, and the community colleges themselves can benefit from honors progams. Benefits for students include small classes with outstanding faculty and superior students, opportunities to work with instructors on special projects, participation in honors events, and recognition of honors achievements on transcripts, certificates, and diplomas. Completion of honors programs can also help students gain entrance into top colleges and universities.

Faculty members can derive the benefits of working with gifted students, developing new courses and instructional approaches to meet the needs of these superior students, and discussing their courses and teaching strategies with honors faculty in other subject areas.

Finally, honors programs can also have a positive effect on the overall quality of a community college's educational

offerings. A well-developed and visible honors program can contribute to the building of quality by attracting and retaining outstanding faculty members and academically talented students, and by enhancing the public image of the institution as a place that encourages academic excellence. Further, developing honors courses and curricula often results in the generation of innovative ideas that can benefit the entire institution.

Evidently, community colleges nationwide are striving to strengthen the quality of their educational programs. A well-developed and visible honors program can contribute greatly to the attainment of this significant goal.

"Accent on Excellence" at Clark County Community College

Given the nationwide emphasis on quality education, in early 1983 Clark County Community College established its "Accent on Excellence" program as one of its objectives. Here is the original draft of this program:

> "As Clark County Community College (CCCC) shapes its mission during its second decade of service to southern Nevada, the College continues to emphasize occupational, university transfer, and developmental education for all adults who can profit from post-secondary educational experiences. In addition, CCCC is developing a new dimension to educational programming which focuses on curricular areas requiring selective admission criteria and accelerated learning methods. These programs are designed for superior students and emphasize quality and excellence. The general rubric for the diverse collection of these programs is Accent on Excellence.
>
> Programs which are currently identified to be highlighted through Accent on Excellence include:
>
> 1. An Honors Program which accentuates interdisciplinary, technical/theoretical study opportunities for superior students.
>
> 2. A Community Interaction Forum which brings together national leaders and/or scholars and selected students, faculty, and community leaders around issues of contemporary social, political, and economic concern.
>
> 3. A Distinguished Residence Program which brings recognized scholars/practitioners to the campus for 1 to 2 week periods for lectures and seminars.
>
> 4. An Arts Alive Program which brings recognized artists/performers to the campus for lecture/demonstrations, seminars, and master classes.

5. A Gifted Student Program for junior high and high school students who would attend summer session classes designed specifically for them.

6. A Cultural Awareness Program which offers a variety of travel experiences to selected students and faculty."[3]

Outside Funding Support

Unfortunately, this "Accent on Excellence" direction was set during a time of even more decreased state funding. Given the disdain that legislators often seem to have for education, we correctly assessed that the odds of increased state funding for something as frivolous as an honors program would be unlikely. With this avenue of funding evidently unavailable, we felt our only alternative was to seek outside funding. The last sentence of the Accent on Excellence page reads "Other emphases within Accent on Excellence will be formulated in the future, and all emphases will be used as vehicles for securing private fiscal support."

In order to get any part of this Accent on Excellence thrust funded from outside sources, it is necessary to understand the overall approach Clark County Community College took in seeking private support. The Accent on Excellence program was only one part of what we called our Resource Development Plan which we had developed to structure our efforts in seeking outside funding. One of the cornerstones of the Resource Development Plan of the College was our commitment to the concept of accountability. In addition to our Accent on Excellence thrust, we were also committed to a strengthening of the College's testing and placement function and the three year cycle of program and service reviews which were established in the College Master Plan. In our Resource Development Plan, we emphasized that to assure continued quality education and increased attention to excellence, the College required institutional willingness but, more importantly, adequate fiscal resources. The administrators and the faculty of the College possessed the will to achieve the desired goal of excellence but needed the commitment of the newly-formed Clark County Community College Foundation and outside sources to provide the required fiscal support.

Specifics of the Resource Development Plan were developed with the assistance of faculty and staff in order to identify the areas in which fiscal support for the College was required. Program statements were developed for each of the support categories and these statements identified (1) the nature of the project; (2) how the resources will be used; (3) the impact of the project; and, (4) five year revenue goals. We further specified the various types of gifts which we would be happy to receive. The net effect was that we had developed an overall Resource Development Plan that, in terms of educational philosophy, was a part of the College's Master Plan and was in fact

published with it. Within the Resource Development Plan we outlined specific projects and suggested budgets. With this Plan, we thus made a number of things clear to potential donors:

1. All of the projects were a part of the College's overall educational philosophy;

2. The projects were a part of that thrust yet did not supplant taxpayer support, but rather augmented it;

3. All of the projects were tangible, visible, and measurable ones which could be easily recognized by the potential donors. Their name and/or gifts would be attached to something recognizable for them.

With this overall Resource Development Plan in hand, we then began to use our Foundation and other community contacts to seek support for this Resource Development Plan. The role of the President, particularly in a community college, is critical to this effort. Only in rare instances is the Chief Development Officer as visible throughout the community as is the President. In most cases, the President is the front line person, the person who is really going to have to build the ties to the community, and who is going to have to be the person who makes the direct contact with potential donors. The President must be the one assuring them that this is what the college is planning on doing, seeking their support, and getting them to "sign on the dotted line." The Development Officer acts as this producer of the drama and sets the stage, provides the opportunity for the President to come in and make the personal contact, make the basic arguments, and push toward getting the person signed up. The Development Officer, except in a few rare cases, is really the logistical person-- the person who knows the nuts and bolts of direct mailing, of wills, deferred giving, and all the technical aspects of development work. It is up to this person to set the stage, prepare the documents, arrange the meetings, etc.

It is important that the larger framework of private resource development consists of the President as the educational leader of the institution identifying three or five or eight major philosophical thrusts of the institution, getting the approval or concurrence of the Board of Regents or Trustees, conceptualizing those major philosophical thrusts, working with the Development Officer and the educational leadership of the school to make the thrusts more specific, and then working cooperatively with the Development Office to identify sources of funding for these projects. Quite often, the President will have developed personal relationships with influential and/or monied people in the community that will make this process much easier. Many times these people are looking for something tangible to fund with their money and it is important that the President have a series of projects specifically developed to

meet the wishes of these potential donors. Each project should be identified in a very short and concise one-page narrative and then have a one-page proposed budget attached. In this way, potential donors will have a shopping list to work with.

That is exactly what Clark County Community College did with its honors program as a part of the Accent on Excellence thrust. Our narrative included why we felt we needed to serve the needs of superior students, the specific way in which we would do this, including examples of existing programs and courses which would have an honors thrust, standards for admission to the program, and the number of faculty and students who would be involved and when we thought the program should begin. Attached to that was a proposed budget of $60,000 which was to be spent on a half-time coordinator, 1.25 FTE instructional faculty, .25 FTE secretary, and instructional materials, supplies, and advertising. On these two pages, any potential donor could see enough of what we were proposing to do to decide whether they would be interested in funding it.

In our case, we were fortunate because about ten years earlier the Greenspun family had given Clark County Community College about 120 acres of land. The family had taken the tax writeoff when they donated it but part of the original agreement was they had the right of first refusal if the land were ever to be sold. They were now interested in buying the land back. Therefore, the College got the income from the sale of the property and the Greenspun family had gotten a tax writeoff for ten years and will also get a further tax writeoff on all interest they are now paying us for financing this repurchase over five years. Since the family was interested in funding the honors program, we agreed that the half million dollars which would come from the appraised value of the land sale was to be endowed and we would develop the honors and technology center using the interest from this endowment. With this money now available, we were ready to begin the more specific development of the Greenspun Honors and Technology Center. However, before moving on to outline some of the specifics of this Center, below is a summary of some of the things we learned in seeking outside funding for programs such as this.

1. The college must develop a conceptual framework for its planned major philosophical thrusts or directions;

2. The College must take a proactive stance to private support using a laundry list of very specific, visible, tangible, measurable projects which will augment taxpayer support and help in achieving these major philosophical goals; these projects must show a demonstrable return for the money and must be an integral part of the college's educational philosophy;

3. The President must be the key individual using the contacts he or she has made within the community to

seek their financial support for these projects; and

4. After support is committed for one project, the President should then use that commitment to parlay support from other donors for additional support.

With this background of why Clark County Community College was committed to excellence and quality education and how we obtained funding for our honors program, included below is more specific information about the Greenspun Technology and Honors Center.

Program Statement - Greenspun Technology and Honors Center

Recognizing a need to respond to rising concerns regarding the emergence of technology and the interest in quality/excellent education, Clark County Community College (CCCC) has established the Greenspun Technology and Honors Center (Greenspun Center) with resources provided by Green Valley Associates. These resources have established an endowment for the Greenspun Center which will assure operation of programs in perpetuity at CCCC.

One primary purpose of the Greenspun Center is to enable CCCC to respond to a variety of educational needs which result from the so-called communications revolution. This revolution is occurring in our midst, and changes in technology and the resultant social ramifications are occurring more rapidly than at any time in human history. Southern Nevada is responding to this rapid technological change by attempting to diversify its economy and by attracting technology-related businesses/industries to the area. The Greenspun Center is committed to providing community-responsive, technology-related educational opportunities in Southern Nevada so that diversification may become a reality.

Technology Study through the Greenspun Center will be directed toward meeting current business/industry training needs and will stress the acquisition of demonstrable skills. Course work may take the form of traditional, semester-length, on-campus instruction or may be non-traditional, short-term, off-campus instruction. Faculty will be selected based on current knowledge of the subject matter to be taught and may be regular full-time faculty members or business/industry specialists employed for a specific course. Examples of Technology Study course work include: business communication skills employing video recording/play back equipment, word processing training, computer literacy and competency training, business software applications training, and hotel and health information systems training. Specific course work will be determined by business/industry needs.

The second primary purpose of the Greenspun Center is to provide opportunities for academically talented students to

pursue Honors Study at CCCC. With renewed interest nationally regarding issues related to quality and excellence in education, the Greenspun Center provides an avenue for CCCC to respond to these issues.

It is very appropriate that the dimension of Honors Study be made available at CCCC at this juncture in its history.

Honors Study through the Greenspun Center will provide enriched learning experiences for academically talented students at CCCC. Such course work must deal with some aspect of technology and may take the form of a specifically designated honors course, special honors work within a traditional course, or independent study with a specific faculty member. All university transfer and occupational courses which satisfy these criteria are eligible for Honors Study designation. Examples of Honors Study course work include: history of technology, computer-based music, and technology and values.

Each instructional Division Director will work with the Division Curriculum Committee to select appropriate Honors Study students. To qualify for Honors Study, a first-time college student must possess a cumulative 3.5 GPA in high school and have the recommendation of the Division Curriculum Committee. A continuing college student must possess a 3.2 GPA in at least 15 semester hours of college course work and have the recommendation of the appropriate Division Curriculum Committee. In determining Honors Study eligibility, the Division Curriculum Committee may consider other quality performance indicators and may modify the stated GPA criterion in selected instances.

To achieve the goals established for the Greenspun Center, an Advisory Committee will be formed composed of College and community representatives. By virtue of their position, the Chairs of each Division Curriculum Committee or their designee will serve on the Greenspun Center Advisory Committee which will be Chaired by the Director of Technical/Occupational Education. The Advisory Committee will make recommendations regarding policy and direction of the Greenspun Center to the Dean of Educational Services. All course work offered by the Greenspun Center will be developed and implemented through normal faculty and administrative procedures and will be coordinated by the Director of Technical/Occupational Education in cooperation with Educational Services Directors.

Technology Study course work offered through the Greenspun Center will begin during the Fall 1984 Semester. Because of the rapid growth of computer use in businesses in Las Vegas, preliminary needs data indicate that a variety of computer training opportunities should be made available to local businesses. To satisfy this identified need, three different, short-term computer training offerings designed for 10 students each from local area businesses will be presented by the Greenspun Center:

Word Processing Seminar	15 hour course offered three different times on three successive Saturdays. 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.: September 8, 15, and 22; October 20, 27, and November 3; December 8, 15, and 22.
BASIC Programming for Business Operations	45 hour course offered two different times for 7 weeks: Monday and Wednesday, 6 p.m. to 9:15 p.m. (September 10 to October 24); Tuesday and Thursday, 6 p.m. to 9:15 p.m. (October 30 to December 13).
Business Software Applications	45 hour course offered two different times for 7 weeks on Friday evenings (6 p.m. to 9:15 p.m.) and Saturday afternoons (1 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.): September 14 to October 20 and October 26 to December 8.

Based on the experience gained through these Technology Study offerings, additional course work will be offered during the Spring 1985 Semester. In addition, several Honors Study offerings will be presented by the Greenspun Center during the Spring 1985 Semester. Tentatively, these offerings include:

Science Fiction Literature	3 semester hour course offered for 14 weeks: Monday, 6 p.m. to 9:15 p.m. An inter-disciplinary approach will be used including faculty from literature, social sciences, and science.
History of Technology	1 semester hour course offered for 4 weeks: Friday, 6 p.m. to 9:45 p.m.
Values in Technology	1 semester hour course offered for 4 weeks: Friday, 6 p.m. to 9:45 p.m.
Writing and Technology	1 semester hour course offered for 4 weeks: Friday, 6 p.m. to 9:45 p.m.

The budget necessary to accomplish the first semester operation of the Greenspun Center is presented in Table 1. Programming

and budget for the Spring 1984 Semester will be determined in October 1984 and will be responsive to the experience gained during the first semester of operation. Following adoptation of this program statement, an internal policy and procedure statement also will be developed for operation of the Greenspun Center.

Table 1. Fall 1984 Semester Budget

	Greenspun Center	CCCC
REVENUE		
Greenspun Center	$30,625	
CCCC (Matching)		$ 5,450
Total	$30,625	$ 5,450
EXPENDITURES		
Personnel		
Director of Technical/ Occupational Education (.2 FTE)		$ 3,750
Technology Study Instructors Word Processing Seminar 45 hrs. @ $25.00/hr.	$ 1,125	
BASIC Programming 90 hrs. @ $25.00/hr.	2,250	
Business Software Applications 90 hrs. @ $25.00/hr.	2,250	
Secretarial Support 70 hrs. @ $10.00/hr.		700
Sub-total	$ 5,625	$ 4,450
Operating		
Supplies and Materials		1,000
Software	5,000	
Equipment 10 Apple IIe @ $2,000	20,000	
Sub-total	$25,000	$ 1,000
Total	$30,625	$ 5,450[4]

References

1. McCabe, Robert H. "Why Miami-Dade Community College is Reforming the Educational Program." Miami-Dade Community College (Miami, Florida, March 1981).

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3. Johnston, Dale, et al. "Accent on Excellence." Clark County Community College (Las Vegas, Nevada, 1983).

4. Johnston, Dale, et al. "Program Statement for the Greenspun Technology and Honors Center." Clark County Community College (Las Vegas, Nevada, May 24, 1984).

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